



Presentation Survival School

Level #3 Advanced Skills Training

Breakout Session 335

*PowerPoint 97/2000 Animation Techniques
Interactivity & Hyperlinks to Create More Flexibility
Digital Media Integration*

What do you need to know for this session?

We're off the well-trodden presentation path now. This session requires that you have a good understanding of PowerPoint 97/2000 features as well as a general understanding of digital media such as sound and video. It doesn't hurt if you've got a couple dozen presentations under your belt as well and have embedded a video or two.

Session objectives:

- Understand how to move from text-based information to graphical animation builds
 - Discern when to integrate sound and video and discover how it impacts audience retention
 - Discover how seamless interactivity can add dimension to a flat presentation
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Session Coach

Jim Endicott, Distinction Communication
Owner/Manager

Jim Endicott is a nationally-recognized consultant and coach focusing on professional presentation content, design and development. His articles appear in PRESENTATIONS magazine as well as many industry websites and contain valuable insights for creating professional business presentation content and graphics. Distinction, Jim's Portland, Oregon-based consulting and design business, helps organizations effectively leverage their presentations from initial concept to final delivery. Distinction's team has supported clients such as Kemper Funds, Microsoft, PaineWebber, Covey Leadership, Smith Barney, Dale Carnegie, Charles Schwab, US Bank as well as many smaller organizations trying to enhance the professional impact of their business communication tools.

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1. Design concepts behind animations

We think of animations as simply making things move around our computer screens. Effective animations, however, communicate concepts and build images so our audiences can grasp information better and take our presentations out of the realm of the mundane and create interest. Overuse or inappropriate use of animation can create a circus flavor to the event.

Left brain / right brain learning

Left brain – logical, analytical. Sorts, processes and filters information according to a pre-existing understanding.

Right brain – emotional appeal. Bypasses filtering and is more readily processed and remembered.

Animation concepts demonstrated:

Process builds

Detail blow-outs

Emulating software functionality

Videowalls

Timelines

2. Hyperlinking and interactivity for greater flexibility

The traditional business presentation offered us a navigational security blanket. All we had to concern ourselves with was moving ahead in a linear fashion – no real choices to speak of, but with that ease of presenting it also created inflexibility. What if you didn't want to deliver a "one size fits all" sales presentation? What if you wanted to show or demonstrate other programs but not take the risk of jumping out of your presentation? The ability to move seamlessly between presentations has greater a much greater degree of freedom for today's presenters.

Creating presentation-to-presentation interactivity

How do you represent those navigational options?

Buttons

Photo-realistic images

Icons

Obvious & non-obvious choices

Hyperlinks to your website

Downloading web pages to a local hard disk

Redirecting your browser to your hard disk

Creating the PowerPoint mechanism to initiate the link

3. Video and sound integration

Whenever we can take our audiences into a more personal experience level with our presentation topics, it's proven they will remember longer and catch key concepts better. Sensory-based information such as sound and video allows our audiences to meet a customer first hand or hear a CEO talk about his strategic mission. The impressions go deep, but we first need to understand the language of digital media.

Digital sound terminology

.wav files

Sampling frequency

Sampling depth

Digitizing

Copyright issues

Digital video terminology

.avi

.mov

mpeg

CODECs

Importing sound and video into PowerPoint 97/2000

Inserting sound

Through transitions

Play music from the computer's CD ROM drive

Appending meaningful sounds to animations

Inserting video

Insert Movie option

Insert Object and select alternative movie player file that supports other CODECs

When movies are too long/large to play, leverage projector capability to play video directly from VCR

NOTES:

I trust this has been an informative session for you. Leveraging techniques like these will allow you to navigate with much more freedom and spontaneity while providing your audience with a more meaningful and relevant presentation experience. They'll love you because you took the time! We can then invest heavily in practicing our presentations so we can confidently deliver a well-crafted and uniquely told story.

Thank you for attending this session. If you have other questions you'd like to ask Jim Endicott and did not get a chance, please email those to him at jim.endicott@distinction-services.com.



Jim Endicott

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Hyperlinks are the key to more flexibility and flair

Those of you who read Tom Clancy's books have probably grown accustomed to his unique writing style. All of Clancy's novels juggle multiple plot lines, with characters and situations zinging around like sniper fire. Often you have to take it on faith that it's all somehow connected. But if you can make it through 700 pages, the story elements always elegantly converge.

If you've sat through many business presentations in your lifetime, you've most likely been subjected to a similar experience. But, while a bit of confusion can be interesting in a novel, it can be the kiss of death in a presentation. Sorting through multiple themes and plots in a presentation requires work on the audience's part. But the level of detail required to sufficiently educate some in the audience bores others to silent desperation.

How do you tread that middle ground? The answer: flexibility and interaction.

Traditional linear presentations consisting of 35mm slides or overhead transparencies aren't exactly ideal for spontaneity or elaboration. But today's electronic presentations have opened up a new range of presenting possibilities, particularly in the arenas of flexibility and audience interaction. CDs, video, sound and hyperlinks are just a few of the interactive tools at your disposal.

But before we can talk much about how to create interactivity in your presentation, we need to ask an even more fundamental question: Why?

If you are considering making the leap to interactivity, here are some important questions you should ask yourself:

■ **Who is the audience and in what areas are they inclined to**

want additional detail or demonstration?

■ **Am I prepared to create a level of audience interaction that would allow them to redirect and perhaps dictate the flow of the presentation?**

■ **How will I represent my navigation options? Do I want the audience to see them?**

■ **Do I have a good enough grasp of the content to feel comfortable making interactive jumps?**

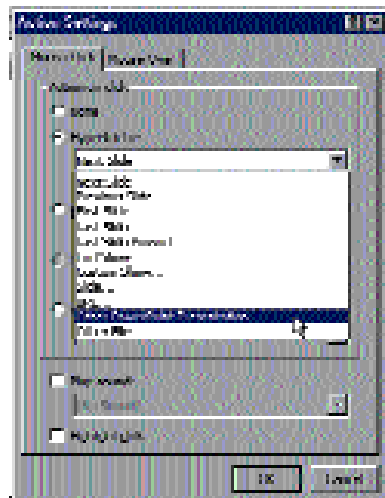
■ **What kinds of examples could I incorporate into the presentation (at my discretion) that would underscore my point?**

Like a master magician, a well-rehearsed orchestration of interactive elements can leave audiences spellbound. But as soon as a link doesn't do what it's supposed to, the cloak of seamlessness disappears, exposing our technology and methods. It's part of the risk we take to hone our presenting skills. I prepare for these types of presentations by knowing where such calamities can occur and being ready to take my audience "behind the presentation curtain," if necessary, to turn the unfortunate moment into an educational opportunity.

Now that we've discussed *why*, it's time to take a look at *how*.

Linking to deeper levels of content

Often there is value in anticipating when and where audiences will want deeper insight into our conclusions. For example, in a senior staff meeting we may want to deliver a summary presentation but create hyperlinks to several minipresentations that explain certain details in greater depth.



Using the ACTION SETTINGS option in PowerPoint, you can easily create a hyperlink to other PowerPoint presentations or other individual slides.

IN POWERPOINT 97:

Using text to trigger a link

Highlight some key words in a bullet slide that you want to link to additional information. Your audience will only see the emphasis, but you know it's a link.

Step 1: Highlight the text that will create the link to another minipresentation. Once highlighted, right-mouse-click on the highlighted text and select the ACTION SETTINGS option. Next, select the radio button HYPERLINK TO and select the "other PowerPoint Presentation" choice.

Step 2: Navigate to the presentation you want to make available. You don't have to go to Slide No. 1. You can jump in anywhere. Remember, however, that this is a link, not an embedded presentation. If you move your primary presentation to another computer, make sure this presentation goes with it in the same folder. (See PowerPoint's Pack & Go feature.)



Step 3: In Slide Show mode your audience will see an underlined piece of text. If you roll your cursor over it, it will show a hand that's your clue to a link. Don't feel compelled to go there unless you need to.

Caution: On "ESC"ing from the second presentation or simply exiting after the last slide, PowerPoint 97 will return you to your primary presentation. Practice this. From time to time I find I've returned outside of the Slide Show mode and sometimes not to the frame I jumped from. Anticipate by rehearsing.

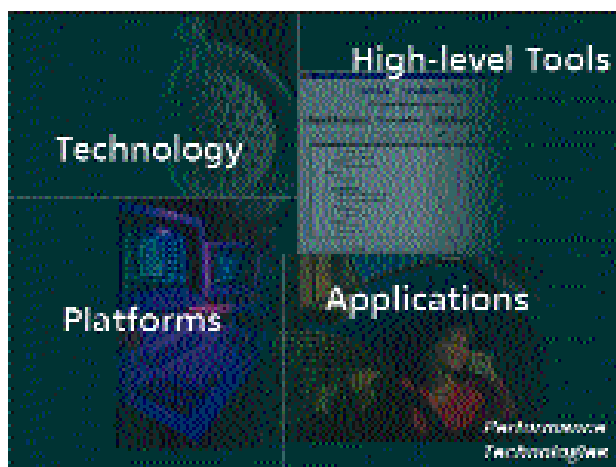
Using objects to trigger a link

If you're providing examples to your audience from specific documents, here are some tips. For example, if you want to show the new sales presentation your team is working on or to jump to an Excel or Word document your audience may be interested in, try this:

Step 1: Go to the INSERT menu option and select the OBJECT option. You will be provided a list of OLE-supported (object linking and embedding) object types. Select the CREATE FROM FILE option and navigate to the specific document. (Avoid selecting DISPLAY AS ICON OR LINK.)

If you select a PowerPoint presentation, a thumbnail of the first slide will be placed in the original presentation, giving you a graphical representation of what you will be jumping to. This is also true of the Excel or Word objects. You will see a small version of the actual image and PowerPoint will know to launch the appropriate application. Understand, however, that you're actually embedding these files into PowerPoint and your file size will increase accordingly.

Step 2: To tell PowerPoint how to trigger the interactivity, right-mouse-click on the imported object and, once again, select the ACTION SETTING option. Choose the OBJECT ACTION option and choose OPEN or SHOW. EXIT the document to return to your original PowerPoint slide.



On this title screen, each section is linked to a separate slide or full PowerPoint slideshow. In the presentation, click on the subject you want to talk about, run through the linked slideshow, then hit ESC to return to the title screen.

Leveraging external content resources

During some of my seminars, I like to contrast different presentation types without leaving the comfort of my PowerPoint presentation, so I create a jump to an existing interactive CD ROM-based interactive tool. Here's how:

Step 1: Run through the CD installation routine to create the program icon in Windows 95. Take note where the CD is installing the components that will reside on your hard disk. There will be an .exe file in that directory that will be the application that will send you to the CD-ROM-based content.

Step 2: Using any object in PowerPoint to act as the catalyst for the jump, right-mouse-click on the object and reveal the ACTION SETTINGS option and select the RUN PROGRAM option. It will prompt you to navigate to an .exe file. Select the .exe file discussed in Step 1.

Step 3: Make sure the CD is in your computer's CD drive. In PowerPoint's SLIDE SHOW mode you'll see the hand sign that indicates an interactive option. Clicking on the object will launch the program and send you to the CD content. Be aware that there are no back doors. It will send you to the very beginning of the CD content. Exiting the CD will bring you back to the slide from which you jumped.

Jumping within the presentation

It's possible to set up jumps within the same PowerPoint presentation, but it becomes a less elegant form of interactivity. To prevent yourself from running into those same images later on, you'll need to create a PowerPoint Custom Show that omits those images.

Step 1: Create a Custom Show that omits the optional interactive slide content you may jump to during the presentation.

Step 2: Use the ACTION BUTTONS option in the SLIDE SHOW menu and create a jump to the first of those omitted slides. Be aware that you will need to place a hyperlink button on each of those slides or PowerPoint will bring you abruptly back after the next slide encountered that does not exist in the Custom Show path.

To be honest, I hope Tom Clancy doesn't change the way he writes. As much as it drives me crazy, it always creates an element of uniqueness and unpredictability that keep me engaged until the very end. I wonder if there's a message in there somewhere for us? ■



Jim Endicott

Learning the basics of digital video is worth the effort

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Because this business communication stuff is what I have a passion for, it's fairly easy for me to work up the enthusiasm to go the extra mile and turn a good presentation into a great one. Unfortunately, this usually means more work. And I'm well aware that for most of the people who read this column, preparing presentations is already time-consuming enough.

But as my high school coach said, it's easy to be mediocre; if you want to be exceptional, you have to push yourself. One good way to flex your presentation muscles is to learn the fundamentals of digital video.

For many, the perceived pinnacle of a really hot business presentation is the digital video clip. That's because, aside from the gee-whiz factor, a properly used video clip — one that demonstrates a product, say, or delivers a customer's testimonial in his own words — adds depth to your message and provides an element of visual sophistication that most presentations lack.

Of course, it wasn't long ago that digital video tended to look like a badly dubbed foreign film, with jerky movement and sound that was hopelessly out of sync. But recent improvements in hardware and software have made it possible to create high-quality digital video that looks and sounds like it should. Multimedia projectors have improved so much in the past two years that most new ones can project clean images that don't ghost or blur. Computer processors are now fast enough to handle relatively large video files and video-editing software is getting easier to use.

Indeed, the technical team has done its part. Now it's time to do ours.

How does digital video work?

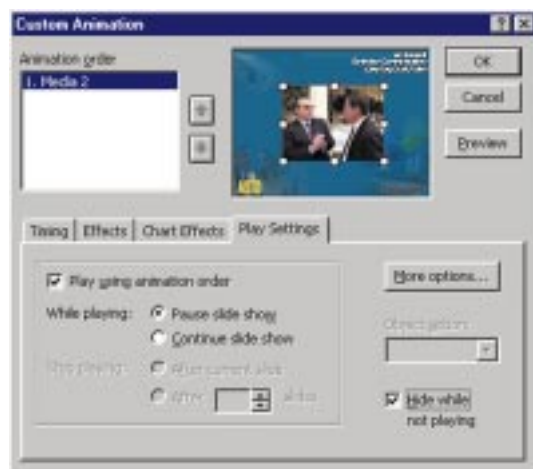
When I was a kid, I remember getting a little stack of movie cards in the bottom of a Cracker Jack box. As I held one end and flipped quickly through the cards with the other hand, the images seemed to move.

That same concept is what creates the illusion of movement in film, and it's at the root of how digital video works. Instead of flipping through cards, your computer is quickly decompressing and displaying a series of single images (frames). At the rate of 15 frames per second, the fluidity of movement in such a video file is perfectly acceptable for most business presentations.

There's just one problem: Uncompressed digital video can take up hundreds of megabytes of hard-disk space. Fortunately, available software and hardware tools significantly compress those images into a much smaller storage size.

Software decompression

Different approaches to software compression are often referred to as codecs (compression/decompression), and there are plenty of them. In most cases they already reside on your laptop or desktop computer and are ready to be called into action when you play a video file. Microsoft Video 1, Cinepak and Indeo are a few of



PowerPoint's CUSTOM ANIMATION menu (Step 4) gives you a number of display options. Among them is the HIDE WHILE NOT PLAYING option (lower-right-hand corner), which will keep your movie hidden until you are ready to play it.


the most common codecs.

(QuickTime, originally a Mac-based video architecture, has been available for some time in a QuickTime for Windows version, making cross-platform digital video transfers much easier.)

Each codec has its relative strengths and weaknesses, depending on the specific playback situation. The important thing to remember is that your video needs to be digitized using a codec that's supported on your computer.

In a Windows environment, video (or movie) files are typically stored in AVI or MOV file formats. Don't expect these digital video clips to fill your entire screen, however. Because of the horsepower required to decompress and display images rapidly, you're typically limited to a maximum 320 x 240-pixel window requirement — the equivalent of a quarter-screen at a VGA 640 x 480 display resolution.

TIP: If you plan to play back a video sequence much longer than



a minute, consider playing the video directly from a VCR into your electronic projector. Most projectors will allow you to seamlessly switch between computer and video sources with the touch of a button on the remote. The obvious advantage to using a VCR in such situations is that you can have a full-screen image with relatively unlimited playback time. The disadvantage is having to haul more equipment to your presentation.

Hardware decompression

In recent years, you've no doubt heard the term MPEG (now often referred to as MPEG-1), a compression standard devised by the Moving Picture Experts Group. A few years ago, MPEG playback required an expensive chip on the computer's motherboard to assist with the decompression process, but it's now possible with onboard software on newer computers.

Once upon a time, the equipment needed to do this MPEG compression cost more than \$20,000. Now, parallel-port encoders that do the job well are available for less than \$500 (see "Capture digital video with a magic little box" in the March 1998 issue). And some digital video camcorders — such as Hitachi's new M2 — even record directly into an MPEG format, eliminating the need for an encoder altogether. Most newer video-capture cards also provide MPEG compression capabilities, but count on the actual compression time taking longer than traditional codecs.

With today's equipment, MPEG compression ratios of higher than 100:1 are possible at 30 frames per second.

When should I use video?

As we've discussed in the past, sound and animation tend to lose effectiveness if they're overused. Inserting a brief video of your CEO talking, instead of simply putting her words up on the screen in quotes, is a great way to drive home a key point. But a 20-minute video of your CEO probably is overkill, no matter how enthralling she may be.

Video files don't have to be

talking heads, either. They can be clips that illustrate a manufacturing process, screen-cam images, 3D models — just about anything, really. They can even be animated logos that rotate slowly in the title slide. Whatever the clips, they work best when used to add credibility to your presentation and to support and reinforce your core message.

How do I import it?

Now that you've decided to go the extra mile, here are the basic steps to incorporate a completed video clip into your presentation.

STEP 1: Move your video clip to your hard disk for playback. CD-ROMs and other external devices may not provide a smooth enough flow of data to keep up with your decompression software. Also, for PowerPoint to link to the file, it must always find the file in the same place, or you'll get an error message. Keep video files you use in the same directory with your presentation.

STEP 2: Go to the specific slide where you want to insert the clip. In PowerPoint 97, select INSERT, then MOVIE AND SOUNDS. (Depending on the codec used, you may need to use INSERT, then OBJECT and embed a different movie player). Choose MOVIE from FILE option and navigate to the folder in which your video file is stored. Select the file and click OK. You will see that the file has dropped into your PowerPoint screen.

STEP 3: To ensure that the clip is the right size when played back, right-mouse-click on the video file and select the FORMAT PICTURE option, the SIZE tab, then BEST SCALE FOR SLIDE SHOW to choose your computer screen resolution. (e.g., 800 x 600). Resist the urge to stretch your video image any larger on your screen. Trust me, the resulting decline in both quality and performance isn't worth the extra inches.

STEP 4: Make another right-mouse-click on the video and select the CUSTOM ANIMATION option. (Don't let the word *animation* throw you off; this option simply lets you orchestrate your

video playback with any other animations on the screen.) Your video file will show up under the TIMING tab as an unanimated media object. When you click on your video file (or any other media image), you will get additional options that you may not have seen before. In the same CUSTOM ANIMATION menu, select the PLAY SETTINGS tab. The HIDE WHILE NOT PLAYING option will make your video visible only when it's playing.

Ordering out

With the proper equipment, you can convert already-produced video into computer-ready files. If you don't have the time or inclination to learn how, there are hundreds of service bureaus that can take care of this chore for you.

To find one, search the Web with the keyword string *digital video*, and look specifically for service bureaus. You can also check out the Yellow Pages under *video production*, but there's no guarantee that outfits under this listing can work with digital video.

If a service bureau understands the concepts discussed in this column, you're probably in good hands. But be sure to request that the data rate (how quickly the video data is fed to the processor) is appropriate for your application. Hard-disk playback can usually accommodate 1,000 Kbps, and CD-ROM playback maxes out at about 300 Kbps. Expect to pay \$90 to \$150 to have a service bureau digitize a 60-second cut from your original videotape.

Once you work through this process a few times, it won't seem like such a stretch. But you won't know until you try. Like my coach always said: No pain, no gain. ■

Tech tip

In Windows 95 and 98, you can get a list of the video compression codecs installed on your computer by going to the START menu, selecting SETTINGS / CONTROL PANEL. Then choose MULTIMEDIA, click on the ADVANCED tab, then double-click on VIDEO COMPRESSION CODECS.